

Message Text

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ACTION AF-18

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SUBJ: LABOR PROBLEMS WORSEN AS ELECTIONEERING POLITICIANS &
OTHERS PREOCCUPY THEMSELVES WITH MORE "TRADITIONAL"
PRE-ELECTION ISSUES.

1. DESPITE MAJOR RECURRENCES OF LABOR UNREST IN DURBAN* OUTBREAKS
OF INTERTRIBAL VIOLENCE INVOLVING THOUSANDS IN MINES, AND
PERSISTENCE OF 10 - 20 PERCENT ANNUAL RATE OF COL INCREASE NOT
OFFSET BY COMPENSATING WAGE INCREASES, GOVERNMENT, POLITICAL,
BUSINESS AND TRADE UNION "ESTABLISHMENTS" HAVE REMAINED PREOCCUPIED
AS APRIL 24 ELECTION DATE APPROACHES, NO SO MUCH WITH PROPOSED
SOLUTIONS TO LABOR PROBLEMS, AS WITH SUCH NATIONALIST-EVOKED
BOGEY MEN AS "LEFT WING" THREATS TO INTERNAL SECURITY AND FOREIGN
EFFORTS TO SUBVERT SOUTH AFRICAN INSTITUTIONS.

2. WHILE IT IS EASY, GIVEN NATURE AND COMPOSITION OF ELECTORATE,
TO IMAGINE NATIONALISTS' SHORT-RUN REASONS FOR PUTTING MAJORITY
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OF BLUE CHIPS ON EMOTION-CHARGED ISSUE OF INTERNAL SECURITY FOR

UMPTTEENTH TIME, IT IS DIFFICULT TO IMAGINE THAT, AT THIS STAGE OF GAME, THEY COULD SERIOUSLY REGARD MORE REPRESSION AS POTENTIAL OR LIKELY LONG-RUN SOLUTION TO COUNTRY'S PRINCIPAL LABOR PROBLEMS.

3. WHILE IT IS ALSO EASY TO UNDERSTAND (IF NOT TO CONDONE) RELUCTANCE OF POLITICAL OPPOSITION, EMPLOYERS AND MULTI-RACIAL TRADE UNION MOVEMENT I.E., TUCSI, TO INCUR NATIONALISTS' WRATH WHILE THEY ARE DISPLAYING PRE-ELECTION VERKRAMPT FACE, ONE WONDERS WHEN OR IN WHAT CIRCUMSTANCES THESE ELEMENTS THINK THEY MIGHT HAVE A BETTER OPPORTUNITY TO CHALLENGE NATIONALISTS WITH NECESSARILY COURAGEOUS PROPOSALS AND PROGRAM SERIOUSLY DESIGNED TO RESOLVE SOME OF THE COUNTRY'S MORE BASIC PROBLEMS.

4. OF COURSE, IF GENERAL HOPE OR EXPECTATION IS THAT NATIONALISTS WILL EMBARK UPON VERLICHT PHASE FOLLOWING VICTORY IN ELECTIONS, THIS WOULD CONSTITUTE EXPLANATION OF SORTS FOR MANY THINGS WHICH ARE EITHER HAPPENING OR NOT HAPPENING NOW. IN MEANTIME, HOWEVER, WITH TIME FOR DEVISING AND IMPLEMENTING RATIONAL AND WORKABLE SOLUTIONS TO WORSENING LABOR PROBLEMS RAPIDLY RUNNION OUT, POLITICAL OPPOSITION, BUSINESS FIRMS AND TUCSA HAVE ALL PASSED UP OPPORTUNITIES TO CHALLENGE NATIONALISTS ON THIS ALL-IMPORTANT ISSUE. UNITED PARTY, AT ODDS WITH ITSELF AS WELL AS WITH NATIONALISTS, HAS MADE NO EFFORT THUS FAR THIS YEAR EITHER IN PARLIAMENT OR DURING ELECTION CAMPAIGN TO TAKE INITIATIVE IN LABOR FIELD; MOST EMPLOYERS, INCLUDING MANY TWICE-BURNED DURBAN EMPLOYERS, HAVE BEEN CONTENT TO CONTINUE PRACTICE OF FOLLOWING SAG'S "LEAD" ON LABOR (WHICH OF COURSE, EXTENDS MO FARTHER AT THIS POINT THAN OUTER FRINGES OF "ENLIGHTENED PATERNALISM" WITH HEAVY EMPHASIS ON "PATERNALISM"); TUCSA, AFTER TALKING GOOD GAME FOR MONTHS, BY FAILING TO COME TO IMMEDIATE AND WHOLEHEARTED SUPPORT OF ITS OWN "LEFT WING" DURING RECENT DURBAN STRIKES, HAS UNDOUBTEDLY DISSIPATED MUCH OF ITS HARD-WON CREDIBILITY IN BOTH LOCAL AND INTERNATIONAL TRAD UNION CIRCLES. THIS, OF COURSE, LEAVES TASK OF TRYING TO RESOLVE GROWING LABOR PROBLEMS BY VIRTUAL DEFAULT TO PEOPLE AND GROUPS WHICH NATIONALISTS NOW GOING OUT OF THEIR WAY TO BRAND AS "COMMUNISTS", "LEFTISTS", "AGITATORS" AND WORSE. IN CIRCUMSTANCES, IT WOULD BE UNREALISTIC TO DESCRIBE PROSPECTS FOR RESOLVING SOUTH AFRICA'S MORE DIFFICULT LABOR

PROBLEMS IN RATIONAL AND RESPONSIBLE MANNER IN FORESEEABLE FUTURE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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AS ANYTHING LIKE FAVORABLE.
DEGRACE

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